The Southern PATRIOT

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NC Bar Blackballs Student Foe of Bias

The North Carolina Board of Law Examiners recently refused to permit an honor graduate of the University of North Carolina law school to take its bar examination. He is Myron H. (Mike) Ross who received the LLB with honors, served as editor of the North Carolina Law Review, ranked in top place in his class, and whose legal articles were reprinted by government agencies and quoted by courts.

But Ross also was the first labor union official to apply for a North Carolina law license and his public record of activity favoring equal rights for Negroes included aid in the integration of Negro students at the law school in Chapel Hill.

Without notice of any charges, the Board called a hearing on Ross' application for the day before the bar exam commenced. During a "three-hour grilling" which the Raleigh News & Observer branded as "judgment by whisper, innuendo and suspicion" he was accused of having "engaged in the unauthorized practice of law" because of negotiating union contracts and appearing before government agencies. He was questioned about strikes, communism, church membership, the Progressive Party, his industrial employment, labor activity in the Democratic primaries, NAACP attorneys, the UMWA, TWUA, and other unions as well as many individuals (some of whom he had never heard of).

Despite his endorsement by the dean of the law school, leading state attorneys and officials, educators, ministers, veterans' organizations and AFL and CIO leaders, the Board rejected Ross for failure to satisfy their "good moral character" requirement. No grounds were given and the rejection was delivered at night, too late to secure judicial redress for the next morning's bar examination.

The Board's "star chamber proceeding" was vigorously condemned by most state newspapers except for the Winston-Salem Journal (owned by Gordon Gray, UNC President) which said that the Board was justified since Ross had "concealed his Communist past."

Supporting Ross was the North Carolina CIO which branded the Board action "bias and discrimination" and "an affront to a man's freedom to practice his chosen profession," and the Durham Labor Journal (AFL) which called the action of "the closed shop State Bar Association . . . obnoxious."

The Carolina Times, leading Negro weekly, after a lengthy investigation, concluded that "neither 'character' nor 'Communism' was the issue in denying him a law license."

Mr. Ross was simply a white man who fought against all injustice, who treated whites and Negroes alike, and who would have made an invaluable member of the North Carolina Bar.

TO FRIENDS OF THE SCEF:

We have been working hard all summer and fall on a Southwide Conference on Youth and Racial Discrimination. Two fine meetings of a planning committee were held in Nashville at Fisk University. A list of almost 300 sponsors has been developed, including representation from 128 Southern colleges and universities. Do you not agree this is a remarkable and gratifying response?

But if we are to go forward with this and our other projects, we shall need your help. With a deficit of $5,334.54 so far this year, we are in desperate need of funds.

If you have not yet contributed this year we hope you will want to renew your gift at this time. The youth of the South have proven they can be counted on in the fight against Jim Crow. Will you help them?

Sincerely,
JAMES A. DOMBROWSKI
Director

Youth Conference to be Held In Columbia, S. C. at Yuletide

The southwide conference on youth and racial discrimination (see Sept. SP) has been set for December 29, 30, 31 at Allen University, Columbia, S. C., in accordance with the results of a poll or the 280 sponsors of the conference.

At a meeting of the planning committee at Fisk University on September 17, it was decided to refer the matter of the time and place of the conference to the entire group of sponsors, who were asked to choose between the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays and to express a preference as to four possible locations.

Results of the poll revealed that of the 3 cities receiving the highest number of votes, Columbia received 63 percent of the votes cast, Nashville 13 percent, and Atlanta 11 percent.

For the theme of the conference, the committee suggested "Youth and Racial Unity Through Educational Opportunity," however in the poll of sponsors, many of them thought this was too long and it will be referred back to the committee.

Four commissions were proposed by the committee: Unity in higher education; Unity in the public school system; Unity and the home (the influence of the home upon racial attitudes); Unity through working together.

It was agreed that all of the decisions of the committee would be presented to the sponsors for approval or rejection. The next meeting of the planning committee was set for October 24th at Columbia, S. C.

Attending the Nashville committee meeting were Roger L. Askew, Dr. H. D. Bollinger, Dr. James A. Dombrowski, Grady H. Donald, Miss Mable Garner, Dr. Victor T. Glass, Miss Louella Moore, Dr. Lee Lorch, Charles Matthias, Mrs. Hattie M. Perry, Robert Sweet and Dr. Alva W. Taylor. Dr. Bollinger served as chairman and Mrs. Perry as secretary for the committee meeting.

Court Rulings Rock Reign of Dixiecrats

Civil rights are beginning to flower even in the dark lair of Leander Perez, Louiisana's arch-Dixiecrat.

Perez, undisputed "boss" of Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parish, has long retained power through rigid control of the voting lists. Any one who was politically **persona non grata** with Perez literally could not find the registrar of voters if he attempted to register. There was no fixed office for the registrar. Naturally, no Negroes were allowed to sign the books.

Fed up with this run-around, a group of citizens brought suits in the two parishies. A brief district court hearing in October brought a mandamus to the St. Bernard registrar to "stay put." A similar decision is expected shortly in Plaquemines.

Registration of Negroes in Louisiana now stands at nearly 100,000. In 1948 only 28,000 were qualified to vote.

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A "dismal" survey of the Negro electorate in Alabama was disclosed late in September by Frank P. Thomas, editor of the Alabama Citizen. He found only four of the eight counties in the Black Belt 6th Congressional District where Negroes were allowed to register with any ease.

While he learned of no incidents of forcible restraint, there were many places where "reliable white sponsors" were demanded of Negro applicants. For this situation he blamed insufficiently aggressive Negro leadership.

However, as a good example of Alabama leadership, Miss Polly A. Myers and Miss Autherine J. Lucy have announced their determination to seek court rulings opening the University of Alabama to members of their race.

Both received letters welcoming them as students in the journalism and library science schools, but were told it was "all a mistake" when they appeared to register. They are graduates of Miles College.

* * *

The Maryland attorney general has ruled that the discriminatory practices of several Baltimore department stores are legal. The stores refuse Negro customers the right to try on clothing—nor will they accept returned articles from them.

The decision was based on the Supreme Court decision regarding restrictive housing covenants and argued that such "private" procedures were not violations of the 14th Amendment.

Southern Doctors Comment on Segregation

In October's Patriot we published the results of the SCEF poll of Southern doctors concerning racial practices in health facilities. Space limitations prevented us from printing at that time selected ballot comments from Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. They appear below.

Readers who may have missed the poll summary may obtain a copy by sending 25 cents to the SCEF, 822 Perdido, New Orleans, La.

* * *

Tennessee

"Fourteenth Amendment to Constitution should be repealed. Why should 125 million white people put up with a few million of another race? God in his wisdom segregated them in Africa." (GP).

"Intermarriage of the Negro and white races will only lead to disappearance of the Negro since the white gene is dominant. The colored race should be too proud to want to be absorbed by the white." (Surgery).

Psychiatrists Blast Discrimination In D. C.

The American Psychological Society concluded its annual convention in Washington, D. C., with a unanimous vote not to return to that city because of the Jim Crow humiliations some of the group's members suffered.

"Sample" incidents described by APS President Dr. J. McV. Hunt at the September session included refusal of a restaurant to serve Negro delegates, segregation of recreation facilities and the "separate but equal" housing offered by the D. C. YMCA.

Asked how many members of the APS were Negro, Dr. Hunt said:

"It doesn't make any difference. We are all one color or another. Socially we are not an organization of colors but of people, and professionally we happen to be psychologists."

The AFL national convention also took racial attitudes into consideration in the choice of its 1953 meeting place. Bids from St. Louis and Miami were protested from the floor because of the segregation prevalent in those two cities and the matter was turned over to a special committee.

Unfortunately, the Anglican Episcopal Church has no qualms in this regard. The sect will meet next year in biased Houston, Texas

* * *

A court ruling quashed an attempt in Bowling Green, Ky., to ban Negroes in Warren County's Home for the Aged. The court declared that it was the county's policy to admit all eligible persons without regard to race.

"It is my humble opinion that we of the medical profession should lead the way to equality and fairness for all." (Obstetrics).

Texas

"The cause of the Negroes has been hurt a great deal since the war by the manner and attitude of the younger Negroes, especially those who were in the service. Many of them do not exhibit the common courtesy and decency expected of any person regardless of race. It is in marked contrast to that found in the middle aged and older Negroes and the older ones complain of the same thing in the younger ones." (Surgery).

"I would prefer that doctors take the initiative in the above (Plan A) rather than waiting for political or other pressure to force such action." (Internal Medicine).

"In this super duper egotistical and self laudatory state the 'Anglo' Texans even carry the 'segregation complex' technique to include Americans of Mexican extraction. Thus 'we' have a three caste system, 'Angles', 'Latins', and 'Negroes', and at times the farcical segregation excludes Latins and Negroes from using 'white' empty beds, even though available." (GP).

Virginia

"In Virginia, local societies cannot admit colored doctors without losing their charters. Each local society is voting this year as to changing the by-laws of the state society to allow admission." (Surgery).

"Plan A is most desirable. However it should be remembered that illness mobilizes considerable anxiety during which archaic defense patterns become more prominent. Non-segregated admission of patients should therefore not precede too far the abolition of segregation in less stressful situations of human relationships, like education, art, public places of assembly, etc." (Psychiatry).

"I would have Plan B flexible. If there is overcrowding, Negroes could 'spill over' into white side and vice versa." (Obstetrics).

"In my opinion the time has come for us (whites) to make a move before world opinion forces us to do so." (GP).

La. Red Control Law Proves Menace to Negro Voters

The note of low comedy is ineradicable in the public affairs of the state of Louisiana. Its Bourbons and demagogues wield the pig's bladder and the bullwhip with equal finesse. So, characteristically, state officials took a great big prat-fall in the launching of a Communist hunt.

The last session of the Louisiana legislature passed a Communist Control Act which declared that all Communists and members of Communist fronts who intend to stay in the state more than five days must register with the State Department of Public Safety. Penalty for non-registration embodies a fine of $1,000 to $10,000 and a jail term of two to 10 years. Persons registering must state their occupations, name their organizational ties and identify their associates.

The official in charge of administering this dubious law, Col. Francis C. Grevenberg, state police superintendent, set September 1-15 as the registration period for endemic Reds. But registration deadline passed and the rolls remained empty.

Then, on September 23, the state police struck. They arrested two New Orleans men, Louis Lockett and Robert Burns, both Negroes, for violating the control act. The evidence against them? Both, in registering to vote, had filled out forms at the registrar of voters office in which they declared "I am now affiliated with the Communist Party."

How did this happen? To quote Lockett:

"There's a line on the registration blank for voting that says something like 'I am now affiliated with the blank party.' You fill in the blank 'Republican' or 'Democrat.'

"But Burns and I both read the same thing to say, 'I am NOT affiliated with the blank party'. Both being veterans and having had lots of non-Communist forms to sign before, we inserted the word Communist to show we were not affiliated with that party. We're both good Democrats."

Lockett was discharged from the Army Medical Corps two months ago and is still in the reserve. During World War II he served in the Coast Guard. Burns was discharged a year ago after a four-year hitch in the Air Force, including service in Korea.

Such a travesty becomes all the more ludicrous when one considers that Burns' application to register as a voter was rejected because of a mistake he made in calculating his age. Hence the "evidence" was gained off a discarded form!

But the district attorney's office accepted charges against the pair and they were placed in parish prison, unable to raise $5,000 bail.

Lest anyone think, however, that this incident is a fantasy out of Amos and Andy let us inspect its bitter implications:

First, Louisiana, No. 1 in the union in illiteracy, has a complicated voting registration form that applicant is supposed to fill out without assistance and to the satisfaction of the registrar. Registrars have been heard to boast that "not even a college Ph.D. could get on the books if we didn't want him to."

Second, the state police's choice of initial target was highly significant. At work was the ageless equation of bigotry: A Negro who tries to vote is "uppity" and therefore is probably a Red. And the larger intention behind the arrests, whether they hold up in court or not, was to further intimidate the prospective Negro voter who already has good reason to suspect bias in the mechanics of vote registration.

Illustration by Ben Shahn from "The Untouchables," a hard-hitting pamphlet on hospital discrimination now being distributed by the SCEF. Individual copies are free; additional copies 50 cents each.

LETTERS

To the Editor:

Some years ago when the Southern Conference for Human Welfare was in existence Rep. Thomas & Co. charged that it contained fellow-travelers. The SCHW wrote me asking for financial help. I could not give that, but I thought possibly a letter to my Congressman might help. I wrote it and got back a red-hot letter from Thomas. He took the names off my letterhead and wrote them, trying to get me in trouble. That burned me up but there was little I could do. My church stood by me.

Later, Thomas went to jail. You know the story. In jail Thomas was put in charge of chickens. Eggs were being stolen constantly by inmates to supplement their prison diet. Thomas consented to be a stool pigeon and report. He did. The men caught on and when they got their chance, they pummeled him until his skin was covered with cuts and bruises and then they rubbed in chicken dirt.

He was sent to the prison hospital. And whom did he meet there but a Dr. W---- he had sent to jail in the days when he was riding high and mighty. Dr. W. was one of those who went to jail rather than tell him "whether or not . . ." Dr. W. debated with himself whether or not to treat Thomas. Then he recalled that he was an M.D. and had taken the Hippocratic Oath, and so went to work and cleaned the sores.

My wife did not want me to tell this story but it is too good to keep. I am telling you this for the fun there is in it. Please don't publish it unless you leave out the names.

A NEW JERSEY MINISTER
(Name Withheld)